

School Committee Favors Reduced Board Size

The School Committee voted 3-2 Monday night to support a reduction of the board from six to five members.

Chairman Doris Golden explained that she had led the citizen's petition endorsing such a change which was submitted as an article in the town warrant. Several School Committee members had signed the petition, she said.

This week the board was asked by Richard Silvia of South Main Street to state their feelings about the change, so that he could report back to the Committee to Study Town Government Structure which was meeting the same evening.

A motion was made to support the reduction in number of members. Golden said that she had surveyed the school committees of surrounding towns and found that most had five members, one had seven, and another would have more than five. She noted that in the years she had served, the number of

six members had often been questioned, and that stalemated votes that had occurred had been frustrating.

Committee member Josephine Mahoney said that more members on a committee doesn't necessarily insure better representation and that often they are cumbersome in decision making. Member John Langmaid disagreed, "An even number of members forces a compromise, a one person majority in a five member board isn't strong enough." He added that the School Committee shouldn't be required to vote formally on the matter.

Committee member Pat Walsh said that the vote should come on the Town Meeting floor and needn't come from the School Committee at all. It was agreed that an informal poll of the committee members was all that was required to inform the Study Committee of their decision, but because a motion had been made and seconded, a vote had to be taken.

Town Hall

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met at the Town Hall to discuss this major disagreement concerning Section 429 (historic buildings) of the Building Code.

All agreed that the factor of the building's safety was their greatest interest, Donham said, but the meeting ended at an impasse when the matter of the Code couldn't be resolved among them. The next day they sought guidance from Paul Moriarty, Chief Counsel for the State Building Code Commission and David MacArtney, a staff engineer for the Commission, procedures were set for the continued review of the renovation plan.

Litchfield said it was decided that the Study Committee must first obtain approval of the completed version of the renovation plan from the state Historic Commission. If their plan is approved, it is passed on to Litchfield for further review.

"Section 429 is still in ques-

tion," Litchfield said. "They (the Committee) have a lot of obstacles to get over within that Code book. I can't commit myself until I have a complete set of structural drawings."

Donham said that the plan is essentially the same now as it was when it was last publically proposed. The changes it has undergone include the enlargement of the offices of the Selectmen, the Selectmen's Clerk, and the Town Clerk, as well as the moving of the conference room so that it adjoins a narrow file room.

Donham said that he was confident the proposed plan would be compatible with the Historic Commission's opinion on the changing of the Town Hall. The exterior of the building, the portion that most concerns the Historic Commission, Donham said, would be left almost the same, with the exception of an access ramp on the parking lot side.

Should the plan be forwarded to Litchfield, Donham said, a written amendment will be included describing the plan's fire safety features and interpretations of applicable portions of the Building Code. Litchfield will then be required to respond in writing as to whether he agrees to the plan or not.

If all goes well, there will be a meeting with the Historic Commission at the end of this week to discuss approval of the plan. If disagreement ensues thereafter, a resolution will be sought from the State Building Code Commission once again.



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Water Complaints Down But One Trickles In

The number of water complaints has vastly decreased in Cohasset since late fall and early winter, but one more trickled past Selectmen last week.

Majorie Anderson of Brewster Road stated that for over three months the water in her home has been deplorable and that numerous individuals in the same situation have received negative responses to their requests for help or an answer to the problem.

Anderson claimed that she had to wait several weeks for a repairman to replace her tankless water heater coil, which cost \$45 because so many other Cohasset calls of the same nature monopolized repair services. She noted that her water bill for 1978 cost \$266, which she sound "an exorbitant price for such poor service."

Edwin Pratt, Superintendent of the Water Department, responded early this week to Anderson's complaints. There have been marked improvements in the water system over the last few months, he said, with little or no complaints.

The water system's woes of discoloration and presence of sediments in the water have been attributed to the reversal of flows from the installation of the new water treatment plant last spring, the January

draining of the town's stand-pipe and the antiquated pipelines within the system.

"Every attempt has been made to answer every individual call," Pratt said, but noted that emergency calls during the cold spell were answered first.

Pratt couldn't find any record of Anderson having called the Water Department. As for the cost of her water bill he had no comment, because he had no way of knowing what her water needs were.

Pratt added that state public health chemists are satisfied with Cohasset's water.

Any problems associated with the system, are all a part of the transition to the treatment plant and reservoir, he said.

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